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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8752
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C O N F I D E N T I A L YAOUNDE 000313

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STATE ALSO FOR INL/C/CP; CA/VO/L/C, AND AF/C

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/31/2018
TAGS: [CM](#) [CVIS](#) [KCOR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: CAMEROON CORRUPTION: FORMER MINISTERS OF FINANCE,
HEALTH DETAINED

REF: A. YAOUNDE 237
[1](#)B. 07 YAOUNDE 229

Classified By: Poloff Tad Brown for Reasons 1.4 b and d.

[1](#)1. (U) Former Minister of Finance Polycarpe Abah Abah and former Minister of Health Urbain Awono Olanguena and as many as four lower level officials from their ministries were arrested and detained by Cameroon's judiciary police during the night of March 30 to March 31, according to state-owned and independent media reports on March 31. Post has confirmed these reports with contacts in the judicial police, a unit of the national police that is charged with investigating suspected criminal activity and determining what charges they will face, if any.

[1](#)2. (C) Dutch COM reported to Poloff March 31 that Justice Minister Amadou Ali had, in a March 27 meeting, confided that the arrests would take place the week of March 31. According to the Dutch COM, the cases against the officials are based on dossiers provided by Cameroon's Financial Investigations Unit, known by its French acronym, ANIF. Additionally, the Government of Cameroon intends to use the formal charges against these officials to request legal assistance from foreign governments, in hopes of recovering corrupt proceeds stashed overseas.

[1](#)3. (C) Post had already entered Polycarpe Abah Abah as p212f lookout in the Consolidated Consular Database as part of a Visas Donkey Security Advisory Opinion (ref B). Post will now add p212f hits for Urbain Awono Olanguena, the other officials and their dependents as their names and relevant information become available.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Abah Abah's arrest has long been a chief demand of critics of Biya's anti-corruption effort. Now that Abah Abah has been detained, however, there will undoubtedly be calls to recover stolen funds stashed abroad. We are encouraged to see the GRC finally act against these two infamously corrupt officials, but can not help but wonder whether the arrests were motivated by anti-corruption zeal or political vengeance since both Abah Abah and Olanguena are believed to ascribe to an upstart political clique that seeks to replace Biya (ref A). End comment.
NELSON